

**SAN ANTONIO AREA  
AMBER CHILD ABDUCTION ALERT PLAN  
(Appendix D – San Antonio Local EAS Plan)**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to establish the criteria for activating the Amber Alert by law enforcement when a child is abducted. The program is a cooperative public service effort between local law enforcement, news media outlets, Amber Plan business partners, and the public.

According to the U.S. Justice Department, up to 4,600 children are abducted every year nationwide. There are another 114,600 attempted non-family abductions. The primary motivation for the child abduction is sexual assault. Ninety percent of all abducted children are sexually assaulted. When an abduction occurs, fast action is necessary because sixty percent of the time there is typically a two-hour delay in making the initial missing child report. Seventy four percent of the abducted children are murdered within three hours of the abduction. It is essential for the public to be notified as soon as possible to help find the missing child.

The San Antonio Regional Amber Plan is based on a similar successful program created by the Association of Radio Managers in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. The program was named after 9-year-old Amber Hagerman who was abducted and murdered in 1996. The Dallas Amber Plan involves 33 law enforcement agencies, 30 radio stations and 11 television stations in the Dallas metroplex.

Since July 1997, the Dallas Amber Plan has been activated 30 times; eight children have been safely recovered due to the Dallas Amber Plan. Since 1997, Amber Plans and similar missing children alerts have expanded to 21 states. In October 2001, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children launched an initiative for a nationwide Amber Plan.

The San Antonio Local Emergency Communications Committee (LECC) administers the San Antonio Regional Amber Plan. The LECC is appointed by the Federal Communications Commission to develop and implement the Emergency Alert System (EAS) for a 16-county region of South Texas.

WOAI-AM 1200 and KKYX-AM 680 originate and broadcast the EAS activation in the San Antonio Operational area. Other radio, television, and cable systems can interrupt their normal programming to voluntarily re-broadcast the EAS local activations as a news/weather bulletin or character-generated “crawl” at the top or bottom of the television screen.

Participating media outlets would interrupt their normal programming and broadcast the Amber Alert at least twice an hour for up to twelve hours. The Amber Alert message encourages the public to look for the missing child or suspect, but take no action themselves. Instead anyone who thinks they saw the child or suspect should immediately call the law enforcement agency number included in the Amber Alert. Once the child is recovered, an Amber Update would be similarly distributed to law enforcement agencies and media outlets to cancel the alert. The Amber Plan Subcommittee, composed of representatives of participating media outlets and law enforcement agencies, will review every Amber Alert Activation within seven days.

## **B. BENEFITS OF “EAS-BASED” AMBER PLAN**

1. Every radio/TV/Cable system will receive the information at the same time.
2. No additional expense or re-programming of EAS receiver.
3. Stations have the option of retransmitting the audio that is received when the EAS is activated, or information can be re-voiced by station personnel.
4. With current weekly EAS tests, control room operators are already aware of the system, and use it regularly.

## **C. ACTIVATION CRITERIA**

All of the following five conditions must be met in order to qualify for a local AMBER ALERT:

1. The missing child must be 17 years of age or younger.
2. The investigating law enforcement agency believes that the child has been abducted, that is, unwillingly taken from their environment without permission from the child’s parent or legal guardian.
3. There is reason to believe that the victim is in immediate danger or serious bodily harm or death.
4. It is confirmed that an investigation has taken place that verifies the abduction and has eliminated alternative explanations for the missing child.
5. There is sufficient information available to disseminate to the public that could assist in locating the child, suspect, or vehicle used in the abduction.

## **D. NON QUALIFYING SITUATIONS**

Circumstances where an AMBER Alert WOULD NOT be activated:

1. A child is missing and law enforcement has no evidence of foul play.
2. A child runs away from home.
3. A child is missing as a result of a custody dispute and the child is not considered to be at risk of bodily harm or death.
4. An adult is missing.
5. Authorities are looking for wanted criminals who are bank robbers or alleged murder suspects in adult crimes.

If a missing child does not meet the activation criteria for an AMBER Alert, the investigating law enforcement agency can still alert the media through standard news procedures by sending a press release or alerting the media by telephone. The stations can then determine whether or not to air the incident in their regular newscasts.

## **E. POLICE PROCEDURES**

Upon confirmation of a child abduction:

1. Determine and prepare information for public distribution. The information should be written in clearly understood terms, not in police "shorthand".
2. Designate a department contact for the Local Primary stations. Include the name and telephone number on the standardized form.
3. Fax the document to WOAI-AM 1200 and call to confirm delivery.
4. The Local Primary station will immediately call back to the originating department to confirm the information. Upon confirmation, the Local Primary station will immediately distribute the information to the participating stations and cable systems via the Emergency Alert System.
5. Subsequent updates from the originating department should be provided as events warrant.
6. Upon closure of the child abduction case, a final bulletin should be distributed from the Local Primary Station.

## **F. BROADCASTER AND CABLE SYSTEM PROCEDURES**

Here is how the Amber - EAS Activation Procedure works in San Antonio:

1. A fax is transmitted by the investigating law enforcement agency to WOAI-AM, (the LP-1 station serving the San Antonio area). If it is not possible to reach WOAI-AM 1200, KKYX-AM 680 (the LP-2 station serving the San Antonio area) is the alternate contact.
2. WOAI and KKYX will activate EAS to transmit Amber Activation. The Event Code is **CEM**. (Until all stations are capable of receiving CAE). All participating broadcast stations in cable systems have programmed their Decoders to receive the alerts. All broadcast stations and cable systems in the San Antonio area monitor WOAI-AM 1200 and KKYX-AM 680 on the EAS Decoders.
3. After transmission of the digital data bursts that trigger your receiver, WOAI-AM 1200 and KKYX-AM 680 will transmit the Amber Tone, followed by the text message from the police agency. There will be no reference to WOAI-AM 1200 or KKYX-AM 680 in the Amber activation.
4. Following transmission of the message, the digital data bursts to terminate the message will be transmitted. At that point, the audio message from WOAI-AM 1200 or KKYX-AM 680 is stored in the EAS Decoder. Stations then have an option of either retransmitting the audio or transcribing the message to originate their own broadcast.
5. As stated above, this procedure gives the receiving stations complete flexibility to either re-transmit the audio received with the EAS activation or re-voice the message with the receiving station personnel.

# SAN ANTONIO OPERATIONAL AREA

## AMBER ALERT INFORMATION FORM

Fax to WOAI-AM at (210) 734-6464 then call (210) 736-9740

Reporting Agency Information	
	YES NO
Name of Reporting Agency	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Is this child 17 years of age or younger?
Name/Title of Reporting Individual	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Does the law enforcement agency believe that the child has been abducted, that is, unwillingly taken from their environment without permission from the child's parent or legal guardian?
Contact Number for Reporting Agency	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Is there reason to believe that the victim is in immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death?
Fax Number for Reporting Agency	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Is it confirmed that an investigation has taken place that verifies the abduction and has eliminated alternative explanations for the missing child?
Authentication Password (State Plan)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Is there sufficient information available to disseminate to the public that could assist in locating the child, suspect, or vehicle used in the abduction?

**IMPORTANT:** Do **NOT** send AMBER ALERT if the answer is **NO** to **ANY** of these questions

Abduction Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Known Location: \_\_\_\_\_

### VICTIM DATA:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Eyes: \_\_\_\_\_ Hair: \_\_\_\_\_

Clothing: \_\_\_\_\_

Any Unique Physical Characteristics: \_\_\_\_\_

### SUSPECT DATA:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Eyes: \_\_\_\_\_ Hair: \_\_\_\_\_

Clothing: \_\_\_\_\_

Any Unique Physical Characteristics: \_\_\_\_\_

### VEHICLE DATA

Make: \_\_\_\_\_ Model: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_

LP-State: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Descriptors: \_\_\_\_\_